



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

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News Release

ICE AND THE NFL TEAM UP TO SEIZE MORE THAN \$5 MILLION WORTH OF COUNTERFEIT GOODS AT THE SUPER BOWL

JACKSONVILLE, FLA. -- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the National Football League (NFL), and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office today announced that a joint initiative targeting the sale of counterfeit goods at Super Bowl XXXIX has resulted in the seizure of roughly 20,000 counterfeit items valued at more than \$5 million, as well as three arrests and one conviction.

Called "Operation End Zone," the initiative was launched more than a year ago as a partnership between ICE, the NFL, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, and other state and local law enforcement agencies in the Jacksonville area. The initiative has specifically targeted criminal organizations and individuals using local business establishments to sell counterfeit merchandise in the months and days leading up to the Super Bowl. The effort has intensified as game day has approached.

In the initial phases of Operation End Zone, the ICE Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Coordination Center in Washington, D.C., and the ICE Office of Investigations in Jacksonville produced a brochure on counterfeit goods in conjunction with the NFL. This brochure and other materials were issued to more than 100 businesses in the area involved in the import/export of commodities and local sales. The brochure was also included in the Super Bowl Host Committee's magazine and distributed widely to solicit help from the public and from those authorized to sell Super Bowl merchandise.

ICE agents in Jacksonville also conducted numerous outreach presentations at Super Bowl Host Committee meetings and other business forums to educate the public and business community leaders about the ongoing anti-counterfeiting enforcement initiative.

These outreach efforts have paid dividends in recent months, as NFL investigators, ICE agents and local law enforcement officials have received substantial assistance from the local business community in identifying purveyors of counterfeit goods. Investigators have seized thousands of counterfeit NFL jerseys, caps, and other souvenirs being sold at flea markets, souvenir stands, and from the backs of vehicles for cut-rate prices.

In a single, two-day enforcement action last month, agents and officers seized more than 5,500 counterfeit items, including knock-off NFL properties, Oakley sunglasses, batteries, and purses from vendors in Jacksonville. To date, Operation End Zone has resulted in the seizure of more than

20,000 counterfeit goods, which have filled local law enforcement warehouses. Two federal criminal indictments have resulted. One of the defendants has pleaded guilty.

Operation End Zone is just one example of ICE's ongoing efforts to enforce Intellectual Property Rights laws nationwide. As recently as last May, the United States Trade Representative estimated that U.S. industry loses between \$200 and \$250 billion to counterfeiting every year. As the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security, ICE plays a leading role in targeting criminal organizations responsible for producing, smuggling, and distributing counterfeit products.

In Fiscal Year 2004, ICE agents arrested 218 individuals and brought 140 indictments for Intellectual Property Rights violations, roughly double the 132 arrests and 70 indictments brought by ICE the prior fiscal year.

At the same time, ICE agents and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers together made 7,255 seizures of counterfeit goods worth \$138 million in FY 2004, up from the roughly 6,500 seizures worth \$94 million the prior fiscal year. Together ICE and CBP have seized more than \$600 million worth of counterfeit goods from FY 1998 through FY 2004.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.